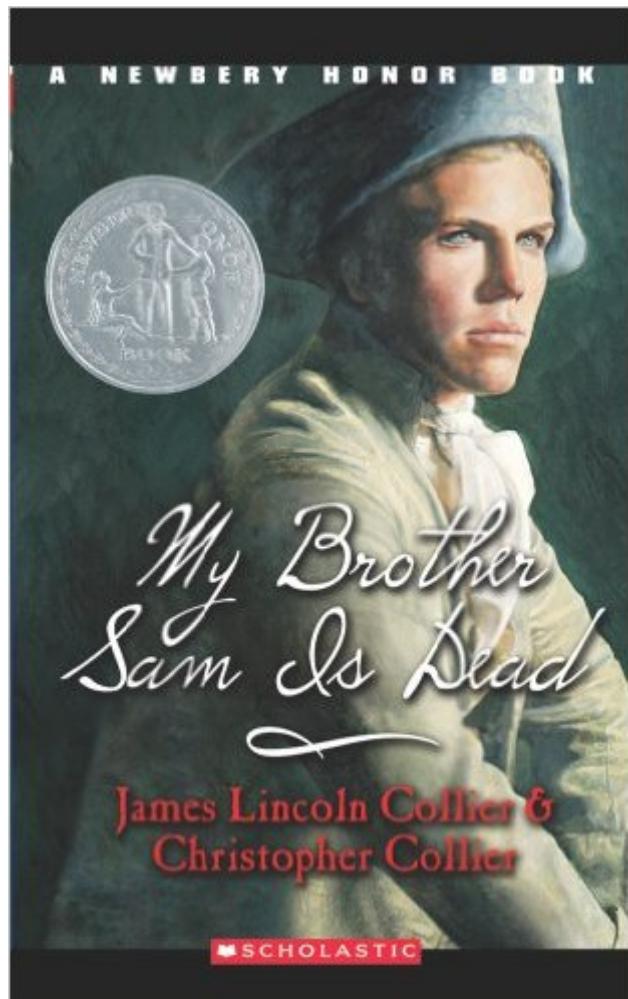


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# My Brother Sam Is Dead (A Newbery Honor Book) (A Newberry Honor Book)



## **Synopsis**

The classic story of one family torn apart by the Revolutionary War. All his life, Tim Meeker has looked up to his brother Sam. Sam's smart and brave -- and is now a part of the American Revolution. Not everyone in town wants to be a part of the rebellion. Most are supporters of the British -- including Tim and Sam's father. With the war soon raging, Tim knows he'll have to make a choice -- between the Revolutionaries and the Redcoats . . . and between his brother and his father.

## **Book Information**

Lexile Measure: 770L (What's this?)

Series: A Newberry Honor Book

Mass Market Paperback: 216 pages

Publisher: Scholastic; 1st edition (1974)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 059042792X

ISBN-13: 978-0590427920

Product Dimensions: 0.8 x 4.2 x 6.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 starsÂ  See all reviewsÂ  (503 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #615,113 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #97 inÂ  Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > United States > Colonial & Revolutionary Periods #287 inÂ  Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > Military #365 inÂ  Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > United States > Colonial

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## **Customer Reviews**

In my 8th grade English class I had to read *My Brother Sam Is Dead* as a required historical fiction book. I read the book in class as well as out of class on my own time. *My Brother Sam Is Dead* takes place during the Revolutionary War in a little town called Redding. Tim, a teenager, is telling the reader his feelings of the war and how the war affected him. I think the author chose to tell the story through Tim because he was torn between being a Loyalist like his father or a Patriot like his older brother Sam. Tim's father doesn't think that his family should be involved in the war and Sam thinks it's his duty to fight for his country. Irony, was what made the book *My Brother Sam Is Dead* interesting. A good example is when Tim finds out his father had died on a British Jail Ship. This

was unexpected because he was a Loyalist and he died on British Jail Ship. I expected him to die on a Patriot Jail Ship. Once you read what happens, your like I didn't expect that to happen. The same thing happens to Sam at the end of the book, but in a different way. In *My Brother Sam Is Dead* there were three main conflicts. The conflicts were personal, political, and character. Tim was the character with the personal conflict. He was trying to decide whether to be a Patriot or a Loyalist. Tim knew his father had his reasons for being a Loyalist and so did his brother Sam. Tim wanted to be like his father, but also wanted to be like his brother Sam. The next big conflict was the political one. England and The Colonies were fighting over who got to run The Colonies. England thought they should get to run them because they had founded The Colonies. The people living in The Colonies thought they should get to run The Colonies because they lived there and didn't believe in England's rule. The last conflict was between Sam and his father. This kind of conflict is called a character conflict. Sam wanted to go to war and fight on the Patriot side, while his father didn't think he should fight in the war. Sam's father was also a Loyalist so he didn't believe in anything the Patriots did or thought was right. In the book *My Brother Sam Is Dead* there were many great parts that I enjoyed. One part of the book that really got me interested was when Tim and his father were ambushed on their way to Verplex Point to trade the cattle for supplies they needed for their tavern in Redding. An other part was when Tim finds out Sam took his father's only gun, Brown Bess, when Sam's father specifically told Sam not too. If I had to pick a theme for the book it would most likely be "Everything happens for a reason." To me, it was like everything that happened to Tim changed the way he lived, acted or even thought. *My Brother Sam Is Dead* was full of suspense all the way through the book. I could hardly put the book down since I started reading it. I also read a historical fiction book called, *One Thousand White Women*. It was great too! *One Thousand White Women* was written in a journal form and I liked that format better than the traditional story form of *My Brother Sam is Dead*. I hope you enjoy both of these books as much as I did.

This is my favorite among the Collier brothers' books. This has been a successful book for me to hand to many (usually boys) reluctant readers. Young readers can relate to Tim Meeker's conscience telling him to do "what's right" and his desire to be like his big brother Sam. Conflict over the Revolutionary War(which is just beginning at the start of the book) brings emotional confrontations to the Meeker household. Most readers can sympathize with Tim as he watches his family torn apart by the question of loyalty to the King or to the colonists. Tim just wants to be loyal to his family, and he wishes Sam would too. This novel is an easy read and is an enthralling read with its taps into the violence of this war. Readers are so involved by the end of the novel that they

want to pick up another of the Collier brothers' historical fiction. And as the authors say, if they said there was two-feet of snow in January of 1778, then it really happened. This is realistic historical fiction throughout. One of the authors does the research & the other does the creative writing to complete this package. This is a great literary addition to any history class. If you like this one, I suggest also reading Bloody Country & The Winter Hero, both by the same authors.

This book describes the fictional adventures of the Meeker family of Redding, Connecticut, though much of the context of the story -- including setting, characters and situations -- is true. The action takes place between April 1775 and February 1779. Tim Meeker begins as an 11-year old boy; his father runs the town's tavern and general store and remains loyal to the English king, while his beloved older brother Sam has just run off to join the Rebels and fight for freedom from the British. The narrative voice of Sam is effective and well-written. A lot of choices are made and many changes take place for anyone between the ages of eleven and fifteen, but just imagine if you were also going through those important times while the American Revolution was happening around you! Sam is confused. He doesn't understand all the issues and has seen acts of good and bad from both sides. He loves his father and his brother. He cannot decide where his loyalties lie. Sam's dilemma makes clear that the Revolution was really America's first civil war -- neighbors fought neighbors, people were right and wrong on both sides, and everyone suffered. This is a realistic book with no struggles or acts beyond the believable abilities of the characters involved. There is no explicit violence but the narrator sees a beheading and an execution, so this book would be inappropriate for young readers; but it captures the dilemmas of growing up and the difficulties of the Revolution in a way that would make it interesting and valuable to pre-teens and teenagers.

Evidently this is a frequently banned book because of the gratuitous language and violent war themes. I think it should be banned because it's not very well-written and its anti-war theme is so unsubtle it practically bludgeons the reader over the head. Repeatedly. The book is meant to convince us that war is bad and affects innocent civilians in all sorts of brutal ways. While this is true, the narrator, Timmy, has a hard time convincing us. The story is disjointed and more a series of vignettes, and between the scenes he is constantly stating that life goes on and he's forgotten what came before. It was written in 1975 so I understand the Newbery committee appreciating the anti-war bias set in historical fiction, but I always wish the selections were uniformly timeless. Alas, they are products of their time. "The Fighting Ground" by Avi explores the same theme in the same time period and it's an excellent book, much better told than this one.

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